

ELMER: A CLASSROOM INTERVENTION FOR INTERCULTURAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: Picture books are a motivating tool at early educational stages and they may extend students' vocabulary and foster children' bilingual education by introducing vocabulary in real a classroom context. Moreover, these resources promote positive intercultural values among learners. Firstly, this paper discusses the benefits of using picture books at early educational stages. Then, it analyses the main intercultural values in *Elmer* by David McKee (1989); later, it shows a classroom intervention on *Elmer*, focusing on the bilingual CLIL approach. Finally, it states some conclusions, which have to do with the potential of this particular picture book.

Key words: CLIL, Bilingual Education, Intercultural Education, Picture books, and Didactic Resources.

Título en español: “*Elmer*: una intervención en el aula para la educación bilingüe intercultural”.

Resumen: Los libros ilustrados resultan un recurso motivador en las primeras etapas educativas y, al tiempo que amplían el vocabulario de los aprendientes, pueden fomentar su educación bilingüe, abriendo al alumno a comportamientos positivos. Esta contribución presenta, en primer lugar, conexiones entre los libros ilustrados y su potencial en las primeras etapas educativas. A continuación, analiza los principales valores interculturales presentes en *Elmer* de David McKee (1989) y da cuenta de cómo esta lectura puede representar un recurso didáctico valioso en términos de educación bilingüe y atendiendo al enfoque AICLE en la etapa educativa de 3-6 años. Por último, se proponen algunas conclusiones.

Palabras Clave: AICLE, Enseñanza Bilingüe, Educación Intercultural, Libros Ilustrados, Recurso Didáctico.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many English teachers in Pre-Primary and Primary Education would agree that introducing cultural elements in the classroom is an essential part of teaching. In this sense, the Spanish Curriculum and the European Educational Acts introduce the teaching of cultural

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elements in the curriculum and teaching standards. The seven key skills implemented in the Academic Year 2014/15 for the 1st, 3rd and 5th courses of Primary Education include: linguistic communication, mathematical and basic skills in science and technology, digital competences, learning to learn, social and civic education, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship and cultural awareness and expression. According to the Acts of Education, these key competences are also introduced in Early Childhood Education.

The *Education Act* of 2006, the *Act on the Improvement of the Quality of Education* of 2013 and the *Royal Decrees* for Preschool Education, establishing the basic curriculum of Primary and Preschool Education express the general objectives of these educational levels. Moreover, these documents outline the learning outcomes that students should achieve by the end of this educational stage. As a result of that, the teaching and learning experiences should be intentionally planned for that purpose. Some of the objectives related to cultural awareness, respect and tolerance highlighted in the aforementioned documents are the following:

- To develop pupils' affective skills in every field of their personality and relations with others, as well as an attitude against violence or any kind of prejudice and sexist stereotypes.
- To acquire skills for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, enabling them to autonomously get by in family and domestic life and in the social groups they interact with.
- To know, understand and respect different cultures and differences among people, including equal gender rights and opportunities and non-discrimination of disabled people.

We also need to consider the bilingual programs recently developed and implemented in many schools in Spain whose main aim is to introduce a second language through content and get students familiarised with the foreign language as soon as they are 3 years old. Most of these programs follow the CLIL methodology and the 4Cs approach to design and develop curriculum and classroom practice, particularly, they focus on 4 Cs framework: content, communication, cognition and culture (Coyle, Hood y Marsh, 2010).

As far as culture is concerned, cultural awareness becomes a main factor in the development of communication skills in the second language and communication is mainly developed through students' interactions. As outlined by the Council of Europe: "when learners develop communication (language and thinking) for cultural understanding, they are building intercultural competence by means of creating awareness and respect for cultural difference" (Council of Europe, 1998: 20).

Apart from the previous ideas, we must be conscious of the importance of developing and raising cultural awareness which mainly starts when learning about one's own culture, looking at: "culturally learned attitudes, prejudices, habits and emotions. Students must first be cognizant of their own behaviour and belief systems so that they comprehend others" (Diaz & Heining-Boynton, 1995: 609). Furthermore, it seems logical that working with authentic materials in the target language helps students to get to know more real examples of the target culture. Sources such as picture books in Early Education offer great oppor-

tunities to access such authentic materials from a CLIL perspective. Foreign textbooks, which are culturally oriented, may serve as additional points of reference. Additionally, using a foreign language should trigger student interest and support the efforts of drawing upon foreign cultural examples at the same time that content areas of Early Childhood Education are addressed.

Another factor that must be taken into account is the importance of reading. Reading in Primary Education or Pre-reading in Preschool Education is also essential according to the current curriculum. Picture books are an essential tool to work on pre-reading skills; those materials have been with children for many centuries due to their polysemic nature and their potential to increase motivation. Besides, other authors have also considered picture books as multichannel realities and therefore, more than one idea can be communicated at a time (Lewis, 2001; Nikolajeva and Scott, 2001).

Sipe (1998) states that in picture books, both text and illustration sequence would be incomplete without the other and they “[...] have a synergistic relationship in which the total effect depends not only on the union of the text and illustrations but also on the perceived interactions and transaction” (Sipe, 1998: 98-99). It must be also considered that children make meaning in a variety of ways, so the notion of literacy is slightly different and should be extended “beyond the confines of just being able to read and write” (Liu, 2013: 1261). Literacy should include other elements such as analysing, understanding or creating new meaning in different modalities; therefore, picture books seem to be a main resource to develop literacy as a wider term in early educational stages.

Having all that into account, as teachers we must choose the right materials and pedagogical resources that not only allow us to attain the legislative objectives, but also promote positive values at school. Therefore, *Elmer*, as well as other picture books might be one of those readings where culture, respect and language come together. Moreover, picture books provide a rich context for learning the second language and serve as a basis to allow pupils to produce new instances of language. Lyster (2007) makes the point that “input-based instruction generally precedes production-based activities in typical content-based programs” (Lyster, 2007:135).

The purpose of my article is to present a pedagogical approach to the reading of *Elmer* from both the intercultural and bilingual perspectives, since as it has been discussed in the introduction, both are closely connected. Some issues from this particular picturebook will be considered from a theoretical perspective below. Then a classroom didactic intervention through the 4Cs will be presented in the second section of this contribution and finally, some expected results and probable key findings will be shown.

1.1. Intercultural Issues in *Elmer*: The Three Areas of Preschool Education

Born in 1935, David McKee is an English writer and illustrator and the creator of the patchwork elephant. The author has produced different titles that have been mainly inspired by the surrealist painter Paul Klee. His work has been translated to more than 20 languages and different titles, whose main character is Elmer (The Patchwork Elephant), have been published between 1989 and 2001.

In *Elmer*, which is the book that has been selected for the lesson plan, McKee introduces the main character, who is a big colourful elephant and is sad because he is not grey like the others. One day, “tired of being different”, he rolls around in “elephant-coloured berries” until he looks “like any other elephant” (McKee, 1989). Then, he goes to meet the other elephants. As he has changed, the other elephants are not able to recognise him. Later in the story the rain washes off his berry covering prompting an old elephant to remark that “it didn’t take you long to show your true colours”. The elephants decide to celebrate this day annually by decorating themselves brightly. On this day, only Elmer is an “ordinary elephant colour” (McKee, 1989).

The author tries to give a voice to Elmer’s feeling of difference and otherness in the story by this sentence: “Elephants like this, that or the other, all different but all happy and all the same colour. All, that is, except Elmer” (McKee, 1989: 3). As Chetty (2014) states, Elmer’s uniqueness makes him difficult to find a place in the community to which other elephants belong. But, not because of the community, it is rather a deep feeling on his own perception. Elmer seems so unhappy with his superficial colours’ difference that he attempts to remove that difference. Thus, the problem of being different is not given by a social context, but rather seen as a psychological condition (Chetty, 2014: 13). The behaviour of the other elephants toward Elmer is consistent throughout the story. The story is of his emotional and internal journey, from being “tired of being different” to accepting his difference.

However, at the end of the story, David Mc Kee has all elephants dressing up in colours to “help” Elmer accept his feeling of being different. It can be considered not a really helpful behaviour to help someone to accept his difference, just by being equal again. That makes us think that sometimes respect, tolerance or self-confidence and other values must be taught by rather artificial events which can serve society as a way of deep reflection, whether by a celebration or other designed activities.

Once the main character and the story has been described, an attempt will be made to relate Elmer’s response not just to cultural related issues in Pre-Primary Education, but also to the three main areas of Early Childhood Education. According to the current *Acts of Education*, three main areas that must be focused upon are: self-knowledge and personal autonomy, situational and physical awareness, and cognitive and language development. *Elmer* represents a helpful material to integrate all those areas as the following figure shows:

	Goals and objectives	<i>Elmer's</i> response
Self-knowledge and personal autonomy	Sense of Self- Responsibility Prosocial behaviour Sense of community	Elmer's sense of being different The elephants in the herd missed Elmer when he becomes different
Situational and Physical Awareness	Social and human relationship Habitats Objects and environment	Animals in the jungle (elephants) Common rules of behaviour in a group Habitat: Plants, Fruits (berries) Colours
Cognitive and Language Development	Problem solving and logical thinking Representation and symbolic thinking Listening and doing Pre-reading and writing	Elmer trying to find a solution for his feeling different The other elephants trying to help <i>Elmer</i> Language: Colours, animals, fruit, repetition...etc.

Table 1. Relationship between Preschool Areas and *Elmer's* issues

As it can be observed in the figure above, most of the issues in this picturebook are closely linked to the main teaching areas in this particular educational stage. According to this relationship of themes and Preschool Education areas, the following section of this article will present a didactic intervention to introduce *Elmer* in the classroom from and intercultural and bilingual perspective. As Macaro (2001: 107) states, "we also have to explore whether, through pedagogic action, we can bring about better strategy use and better language learning", so that is the reason why an intervention has been chosen to work from an intercultural and bilingual perspective. It must be highlighted that special attention will be paid to the area of second language acquisition through this intervention.

2. A DIDACTIC PROPOSAL: WORKING FROM A BILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE THROUGH ELMER.

In this section a didactic intervention on *Elmer* will be described, focusing on the development of intercultural values such as respect, tolerance, self-esteem and self-confidence. The three main objectives in this didactic intervention are: (1) to make our student become culturally and interculturally respectful and aware, (2) to provide a context for them to develop language skills by using the 4 Cs framework and (3) to work on the main three areas in Preschool Education. Moreover, one of the main goals is to focus on the area of language development, but content is also an important aspect in the CLIL approach, so it will be addressed in the intervention. Contents in Preschool Education are related to the

three main areas of development as explained above: self-knowledge and personal autonomy, situational and physical awareness, and cognitive and language development. As it was stated in the introduction, the 4Cs approach will be followed throughout the activities, since it allows teachers to focus not only on communication skills development, but also in contents, cultural elements and cognition processes.

Content, cognition, communication and culture compromise the 4Cs framework which offers a theoretical and methodological approach to lesson planning (Coyle, 2006). Content makes reference to the learners building their own knowledge. It goes beyond the teachable moments in a common classroom, since pupils are encouraged to activate learning mechanisms and build their contents progressively through the activities. Cognition is related to learning and thinking, so the contents can be acquired through the development of critical thinking, classifying or relating processes. Finally, culture will serve learners in their understanding the concept of 'otherness' and developing a deeper understanding of 'themselves' (Byram, 2008). This aspect includes intercultural elements in project planning: setting the context of the content (Elmer's story) in different cultures or cultural situations. *Elmer* is a good reading from a cultural perspective, as has been previously discussed.

Communication is the language that needs to be learnt and used, which is related to the learning context, learning through that language, reconstructing the content and its relationship with cognitive processes. In that sense, language needs to be transparent and accessible. Interaction in the learning context is fundamental to foster communication among learners. As the learning context operates through the medium of a foreign language; language is a conduit for communication and for learning which can be described as: "learning to use language and using language to learn" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010: 36). Communication in this sense goes beyond the grammar system.

In that sense, three different types of language learning should be considered (Coyle, 2007: 550):

1. Language of learning: This consists of the essential lexicon/grammar associated to the topic.
2. Language for learning: Which is the language needed to operate in the lesson, in real contexts for the learners.
3. Language through learning: This is related to the language needed to engage learners cognitively and to generate new language use. In this regard, studying through a different language is fundamental to foster international understanding.

Considering the 4Cs framework, planned activities will be divided into two different sessions of 45 minutes each, having into account that the time devoted to English in Preschool Education is 90 minutes a week. As for the methodology, the intervention will promote significant learning that allows pupils to establish relationships between their background and their new knowledge as well as cognition techniques (HOTS² and LOTS³). In that process

² HOTS: Higher-order thinking skills, as defined in *CLIL: TKT: Content and Language Integrated Learning* (2009).

³ LOTS: Lower-order thinking skills, as defined in *CLIL: TKT: Content and Language Integrated Learning* (2009).

the game will have a main role, since second language learning is more effective when it happens in an unconscious and natural way at early educational stages. The atmosphere must be warm, safe and welcoming, so the students feel comfortable and self-confident creating situations in which kids practise their leaning. Time must also be flexible and adjust to the different learning paces, using target language to promote communication in the classroom will be necessary. It is also very important to foster language learning with visual support, gestures and corporal expression to improve comprehension. Students need to learn at this stage through observation and by means of an active methodology: actions must be done by themselves. Errors must be tolerated and considered the natural way of learning and developing communicative skills.

Grouping must also be considered and it will be in small groups rather than big groups, global or individual depending on the activity. Resources will be different and most sessions are planned to be carried out in a big room, so they can move around and have the feeling of being in a comfortable and safe atmosphere. Also, picture books, digital blackboard, toy animals or a computer to show real animals or other illustrations will be needed. Other common materials such as crayons, face paints or old clothes are needed for some activities.

The activities are described according to the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach, which divides the workshop's session into different stages: warm-up, presentation, practice and production. According to Richards (2006), the three phase approach is widely used today due to its communicative focus. It consists of three phases plus a previous warm-up. In the warm-up, a game, song or daily routines are introduced. Then, new vocabulary is presented and the teacher will check students' comprehension of it in the presentation phase. After that, there is a practice phase, also known as the controlled practice in which students practice the new vocabulary or grammar in context through games or arts and crafts activities. Finally, in the production, students use the contents or information previously learnt in order to develop fluency and work on their new knowledge in a semi-independ way.

According to Richards (2006) the PPP lesson structure has been slightly modified to be used today. But it is still highly useful model to organise the different teacher's steps in a lesson. Richards (2006) points out:

Many speaking- or grammar-based lessons in contemporary materials, for example, begin with an introductory phase in which new teaching points are presented and illustrated in some way and where the focus is on comprehension and recognition. Examples of the new teaching point are given in different contexts. This is often followed by a second phase in which the students practice using the new teaching point in a controlled context using content often provided by the teacher. The third phase is a free practice period during which students try out the teaching point in a free context and in which real or simulated communication is the focus. Richards (2006: 8)

It should be outlined that new approaches name practice and production phases as controlled-practice and free-practice and more attention is paid to simulate real communication, but the main principles to conduct a lesson are considered Richards' model (2006). In the following section of my article, a lesson plan on *Elmer* is presented. This lesson plan will serve as an intervention to observe pupils' performance and evaluate the achievement of the main objectives.

2.1. Task design

The following task is designed for 90 minutes, which is the time devoted to English in Bilingual Preschool Education, which is the context where this study has been carried out. The participants are 3-4 year-old pupils and the main objective is to integrate content and language by using the story *Elmer* by David McKee. The tasks follow the methodological principles for Early Childhood Education and are designed according to the 4Cs framework: content, cognition, communication and culture. The expected results are related to vocabulary development (that is content and language at this stage), intercultural values, thinking processes.

Table 2 shows some previous considerations about the objectives and contents related to the 4Cs framework, it includes some vocabulary themes and contents, too:

CONTENT	LANGUAGE	
Areas: Literacy: To learn and pre-read colours, to understand adjectives and adverbs Arts: To get to know the style of Paul Klee (Swiss-German painter and artist) Science: To get new knowledge of the elephants' habitat and to learn some fruits	Language OF learning	Colours, animals, fruits, adjectives
	Language FOR learning	Classroom language
	Language THROUGH learning	Activating the target language through the cognition processes
COGNITION	CULTURE	
LOTS: remembering, understanding, applying -Remembering colours in the story -Understanding Elmer's feeling in his relationship with other elephants -Applying respectful behaviour in the classroom setting HOTS: analysing, evaluating, creating -Analysing each other's Elmer's' representations -Evaluating Elmer and other elephants' behaviour -Creating and decorating a new elephant	Cooperate and collaborate: get together in pairs and small groups Self-respect and others-respect: accepting differences in working styles, drawings and other tasks Sense of community: working in groups	

Table 2. 4Cs Framework on *Elmer*

As the figure above shows, contents and vocabulary are taken from the picturebook and they can be divided into three main areas: Literacy, Arts and Science. For literacy, we find lots of examples of adjectives (i.e. elephant [...] young, short, thin, different, happy) and some adverbs (i.e. absolutely, usually) which can be worked on and emphasised in the story. A large reference to colours is also found in the story and those can be easily worked on through illustrations (i.e. yellow, purple, orange, green...etc.). Moreover, Science will be linked to the second area of Early Childhood Education, which focuses on the situational and physical awareness competence by presenting themes such as the jungle elephants, the habitat and some fruits. In the case of Art, as we have previously outlined, Paul Klee and its particular style will be directed through students' illustrations, drawings and understanding and valuing each other's works.

As far as language is concerned, the 4Cs framework divides communication into three main areas: language for learning that mainly focuses on the language classroom, such as basic instructions, sentences or routines (i.e. colour the elephant, get in groups, show your drawing, listen, compare...etc.). Language of learning, as described above, makes reference to the content and cognition parts in the 4Cs framework; therefore, it involves Literacy, Science and Arts terms such as colours (i.e. pink, blue, yellow, green), adverbs (i.e. usually, always, absolutely) animals (i.e. elephant "herd of elephants", zebra, lion, tiger, hippo) or fruits (berries). Language of learning linked to Arts will include verbs (i.e. paint, colour, draw, compare). Language through learning is related to the linguistic expressions which will be enhanced in the target language through the different activities (i.e. I like/I don't like, my elephant is...etc.). It must be highlighted that by giving and expressing their opinion, pupils will be encouraged to show respect and value each other's contribution. Hence, the linguistic expressions addressed in this section will emphasise tolerant and respectful behaviour towards other classmates.

The first session has been designed in order to carry out the pilot study that will be conducted in the 4-5 year-old classroom context. The lesson plan will work on the three main areas through group and whole class activities which can promote active learning.

2.2. Elmer's Pilot Session

After a review of literature and the consideration of the main ideas in this picture book, a pilot session has been designed to be conducted within five different schools. For that, we use control groups and the teachers will be in charge of implementing the lesson plan and recording the observations by means of the assessment items described below and related to the main objectives of this intervention.

ACTIVITY	PROCEDURE_description	RE-SOURCES
Phase: Warm-up Activity: Listen, look and say Timing: 10 minutes Contents: Story: <i>Elmer</i> Grouping: whole class, taking turns Aim: To familiarize students with the story	<p>The teacher reads the picture book, <i>Elmer</i>, using audio-visual or traditional methods.</p> <p>NOTE: Visual aid representing the main character is important to foster comprehension.</p>	Audio-visual or traditional storytelling.
Phase: Presentation Activity: Draw and compare Timing: 15 minutes Contents: Literacy (colours) Arts (drawing and colour a new elephant) Grouping: four groups Aim: To remember colours and to create a new elephant	<p>The teacher distributes large sheets of paper and colours to every group. Pupils are encouraged to draw and colour an elephant. Students must show their drawings to the rest of the class and say the colours of the elephant.</p> <p>NOTE: The teacher will reflect on the differences and positive aspects of each drawing.</p>	Paper, colours.
Phase: Practice Activity: Listen and do Timing: 20 minutes Contents: Science, Literacy Grouping: two groups Aim: To know the names of other animals who live in the jungle.	<p>Students watch a power point presentation showing the page on the book where Elmer's other friend are drawn. The teacher will present those animals and will encourage pupils to match them to the real animals on the digital blackboard. Berries and other common edible plants will also be presented.</p>	Digital backboard, picture, <i>Elmer</i> .
Phase: Production Activity: Listen and perform Timing: 15 minutes Contents: Literacy (oral expression) and Arts (drama) Grouping: Global Aim: To know and use adjectives and colours to describe their appearance	<p>Pupils will use old clothes and face paints to disguise themselves as if they were celebrating Elmer's Day Parade. Once they are dressed up in colours, taking turns, pupils will describe their colours and will be encouraged to appreciate differences using adjectives.</p>	Picture Book, face paints, old clothes.

Table 3. Pilot session on *Elmer*

2.3. Assessing the Intervention's Effectiveness in terms of Students Performance

At the beginning of this article, we had two main goals to approach *Elmer's* effectiveness in the classroom: (1) to make our student become culturally and interculturally respectful and aware, (2) to provide a context for them in order to develop language skills by using the 4 Cs framework and (3) to work on the main three areas in Preschool Education. In this section, an assessment chart is provided to evaluate the different items developed. Teachers' observation of pupils' performance organised around the areas of knowledge and development will be the main assessment tool.

In this section, attention will be paid to students performance in order to know the main capacities and competences that they develop through this lesson plan by using observation. Assessment in Pre-Primary Education must be understood as a flexible tool which should be constantly related to pupils' possibilities and or their context. In the 4Cs framework, one of the main issues is if teachers should evaluate content or language. According to Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010), content will be first in non-linguistic areas and then language, and it is important "to have a clear head about that priority" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010: 115), since it is related to the course objectives. Therefore, the evaluation criteria designed are divided into the three main content areas. Having into account that Literacy is one of those, the capability to produce second language vocabulary can be assessed at this point. Other important cultural issues in the picturebook (respect, sense of community, etc.) will also be addressed. The following figure shows these criteria:

ASSESSMENT CHART OF PUPILS' PROGRESS							Pupils' name
Self-knowledge and personal autonomy							
1. Works well in group (sharing colours, taking turns, etc.) 2. Values other pupils' drawing and his/her drawing (accepting differences, understanding their classmates) 3. Understands the concept of friendship and Elmer's feelings in the story							
Situational and Physical Awareness							

ASSESSMENT CHART OF PUPILS' PROGRESS									Pupils' name
1. Recognises the animals in the jungle and associates them with the real animals 2. Knows the colours of some fruits and plants. 3. Creates a new elephant using symbolic thinking									
Cognitive and Language Development									
1. Knows the colours, animals learnt and some fruit in the second language. 2. Listens and understands the story using visual support in the book. 3. Expresses preferences (i.e. I like/ I don't like) and uses some adjectives (i.e. "Elmer is happy/sad)									
Class:	Teacher:	Date:	Symbols: vvv= well achieved/ vv= about average/v=needs more practice						

Table 4. Observation Assessment Grid

As it is observed in the Table 4, language is mostly assessed in the third area and contents of three main areas are also evaluated through the assessment grid. However, as pre-reading and pre-writing are being developed at this stage of Education, language will be worked through the whole intervention by using Elmer's story in English.

2.4. Key findings expected from the intervention

The expected results are directly related to the main objectives that we have designed. In general, outcomes have to do with the development of cultural and intercultural awareness, but also with the main principles related to the CLIL methodology, mainly focusing on language development and building new contents from that methodology.

Content is expected to be gained in the areas of second language Literacy, Science and Arts through the activities designed. Colours, animal's names, fruits and some plants and adjectives will particularly be worked on in order to develop Second language Literacy. In the area of Science, some jungle animals as well as some common fruits or plants will be learnt. Integrating the real representation of animals and plants' images together with their drawings will be one of the main activities to familiarise students with this particular habitat. Arts and the style of Paul Klee will be directed in the second activity, since pupils will get into groups and will draw and colour a big elephant. The appreciation of other

students' representations and their group's representation by using appropriate language structures will also be addressed.

Lower and Higher order thinking skills are also thought to be gained, mainly by remembering colours in the story, understanding Elmer's feelings with respect to his relationship with other elephants, applying respectful behaviour in the classroom setting in the case of LOTS. As far as HOTS is concerned, pupils will be encouraged to analyse their Elmer's representations and to evaluate Elmer's and the other elephants' behaviour. It is also important to focus on the creation and decoration of a new elephant using colours and papers. Pupils will also develop their HOTS in creating a new costume and appreciating other students' costumes.

Language development is the main purpose of the third area of Pre-Primary Education. In that regard, attention will be paid to language for, of and through learning. It is expected that during the intervention pupils are able to reproduce the vocabulary in the story: colours, some adjectives, some animals and plants. Classroom language (language of learning) will also be used throughout this intervention (i.e. get into your group, say the colours, repeat, come on, let's finish, etc.) and students are expected to listen and understand by means of mimic and repetition. During Elmer's reading as well as in the activities, new language will appear (i.e. adverbs), but also questions while telling the story (i.e. Do you know what they did?/Do you like it?). This is the area of language known as language through learning and by presenting the story in a picture book, pupils will gain new expressions and vocabulary.

Culture and cultural values as well as other aspects related to cultural awareness will be also addressed by means of group work, routines and habits in the classroom, self-respect and other students' respectful attitudes towards the representation of Elmer. Sense of community together with cooperation and collaboration are also important at this stage.

The main limitation of the present study is that the classroom intervention has not been implected, yet. However, the proposal is fully detailed and the activities, objectives and evaluation criteria are completely explained. Future research on the field will show the results obtained and the future steps to work on picture books by using a CLIL approach.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown an intervention based on a popular picturebook by David McKee, paying particular attention to the bilingual approach in the activities' design and developing intercultural awareness. Even though the lesson plan has not been carried out yet, it is fully explained and its results may be observed in the classroom context through the observation grid provided. Therefore, teachers who work in the bilingual programs in Early Childhood Education are better able to reflect on how to improve their practice by introducing a specific picture book.

Moreover, as it is stated by Lyster (2007: 50): "immersion and content-based classrooms provide rich contexts for seamlessly integrating form-focused instruction into literacy practices that fit within broader educational objectives". In this sense, the CLIL approach to *Elmer* has been provided in this article. It has focused on integrating the three areas of Early Childhood Education together with a bilingual approach and provides a motivating context.

Cultural issues have been addressed by using the main prompts in *Elmer* picturebook, mainly by introducing respect and tolerance as well as cooperation, collaboration and sense of community in the activities' design. With regard to the assessment process, attention has been drawn on designing an assessment grid of the three main areas of Early Childhood Education which may serve as a useful tool for teachers and researchers in order to ascertain pupils' language and content acquisition. Furthermore, the observation grid may be used in future studies to analyse the results by using qualitative research.

The present classroom study seeks to improve bilingual teaching practices and focus on intercultural issues. However, it must be noted that individual differences, school location and teachers' methodological abilities may influence the expected results of this classroom intervention.

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